

Dover Public Library Policy on Patron Privacy and Confidentiality of Library Records

All information about our patrons is held in strict confidentiality. The information you provide to the Dover Public Library when you apply for a card, and even the fact that you are a cardholder, is confidential. The record of what you check out and return is also protected. The library does not share, lease, or sell any personally identifiable information stored in its patron database to any outside parties.

You have complete control over who has access to your card information. If you give your card or card number to someone, you are giving that person permission to access all the information your record contains. Possession of another's library card (whether by a spouse, parent, or even an unrelated individual) does imply consent. Please notify the library if your card is lost or stolen.

The Dover Public Library does not release information about any patron's account, regardless of age, except under conditions specified by New Hampshire state law. Concerning privacy of library user records, New Hampshire Revised Statutes Chapter 201-D:11 states:

I. Library records which contain the names or other personal identifying information regarding the users of public or other than public libraries shall be confidential and shall not be disclosed except as provided in paragraph II. Such records include, but are not limited to, library, information system, and archival records related to the circulation and use of library materials or services.

II. Records described in paragraph I may be disclosed to the extent necessary for the proper operation of such libraries and shall be disclosed upon request by or consent of the user or pursuant to subpoena, court order, or where otherwise required by statute.

III. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any library from releasing statistical information and other data regarding the circulation or use of library materials provided, however, that the identity of the users of such library materials shall be considered confidential and shall not be disclosed to the general public except as provided in paragraph II.

It is the policy of the Library Board of Trustees to follow state statutes regarding patron privacy. Under N.H. Law, all library records, even those of a child, have the same confidentiality protections. However, because the Dover Public Library understands that instances may arise when it is necessary for a parent or legal guardian, who is financially responsible for the child's library materials, to be provided with the information about

their child's library record (for example, when a child has a fine, or when a child has misplaced library materials), parents may obtain information about a minor child's records if:

- 1.) the child is present with the parent or guardian in the library;
- 2.) the parent or guardian has possession of the minor's library card (which implies consent);
- 3.) the parent or guardian can supply the 14-digit patron barcode number from the child's card (which implies authorization);
- 4.) the parent or guardian has possession of a printed overdue notice for the child's materials.

In all instances and regardless of circumstances, it is the policy of the Dover Public Library to safeguard access to patron library records and restrict access to that information only to the patron who owns the card or to the parent or legal guardian with consent of the minor.

This means that when parents inquire as to the titles of items their children have borrowed, library policy and state law dictate that, unless one of the above four conditions is met, parents may only be told how many items are out and when they are due, and may not be told the titles of the items unless necessary for the collection of overdue fines, or loss or damage to the materials. It is suggested that parents who wish to have access to their child's current borrowing record should either check out the child's items on their own card or, if the child has his/her own library card (available at age 5), keep the child's card or patron barcode number with them.

If a patron requests the titles of items he or she has personally checked out, that person may be asked to provide their library card number as a means of identification. For requests made by telephone, the patron should be ready to supply their library card number as identification. Patrons may also check their own current borrowing record, accessed with their library barcode number, from any workstation in the library or remotely through the library's online catalog at <http://www.dover.lib.nh.us>. Click on *Library Catalog*, then choose the *My Account* tab.

The Dover Public Library Board of Trustees recognizes that the confidentiality of library records is directly related to the freedom of citizens to read and pursue information without fear of intimidation, and is central to the concept of Intellectual Freedom.

Adopted _____9/4/03_____

Dover Public Library Board of Trustees